

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification at page 22, paragraph 2, to read as follows. This amendment to the specification adds some further description of subject matter disclosed in the application as filed, and is believed not to disclose new matter.

In a further aspect of the invention, nucleus pulposus implants are provided having shape memory that are configured to allow extensive short-term manual, or other, deformation without permanent deformation, cracks, tears, breakage or other damage, that may occur, for example, during placement of the implant into an intervertebral disc space. Referring now to FIGS. 15A and 16A, in one form of the invention, implant 40 includes a load bearing elastic body 41 with shape memory and having a first end 42 and a second end 43 that are positioned adjacent to a central portion 44 to form at least one inner fold 45. As shown in the drawings, the ends may be folded so that ends 42a and 43a abut without overlapping. Inner fold 45 preferably defines at least one aperture 46 which is advantageously arcuate, but the apertures are small relative to the size of the implant so that the center "core" of the implant is substantially solid when the implant is in its first, folded configuration. The implant thus provides a top, load bearing surface having a substantially solid center portion, and a bottom, load bearing surface having a substantially solid center portion, when the implant is in its first, folded configuration, as shown, for example, in FIG. 15A. The elastic body is deformable, or otherwise configurable, manually, for example, from this first folded, or otherwise relaxed configuration shown in FIG. 15A into a second, substantially straightened, or otherwise non-relaxed configuration shown in FIG. 16A for placement into the intervertebral disc space. As elastic body 41 has shape memory, it